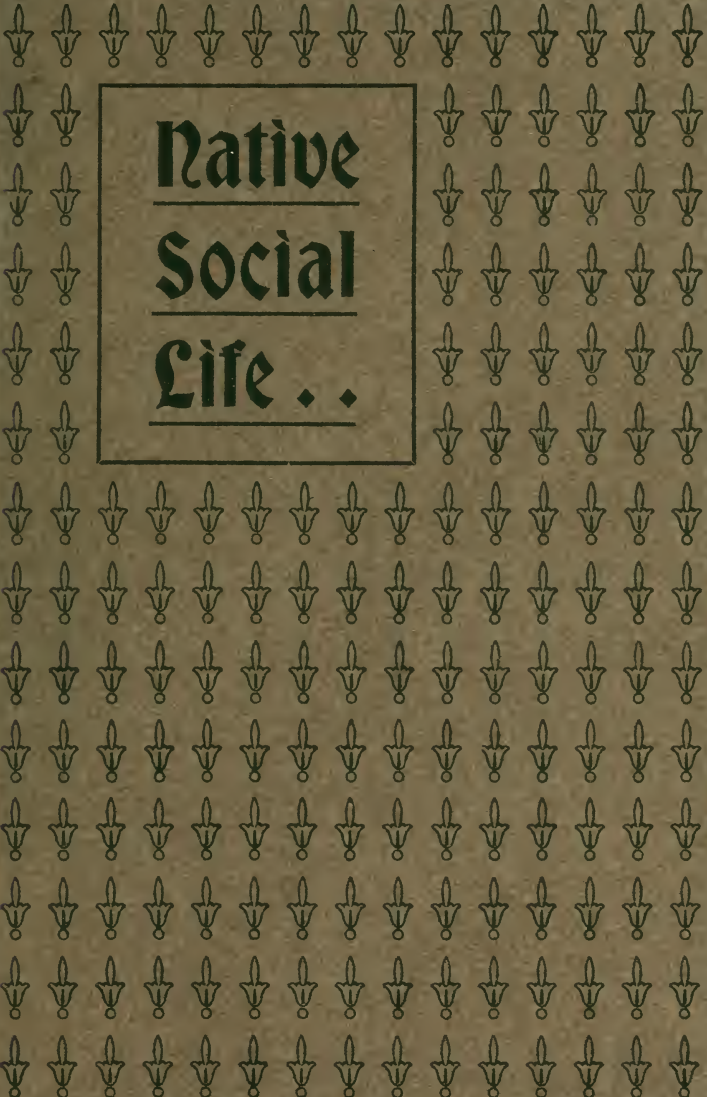


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NATIVE SOCIAL LIFE.

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NATIVE SOCIAL LIFE:

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE HOME LIFE.
RELIGION, ARTS & CRAFTS, MANNERS,
CUSTOMS, SUPERSTITIONS, & FOLK
LORE OF SOME OF THE NATIVE
TRIBES OF SOUTH AFRICA.

— BY —

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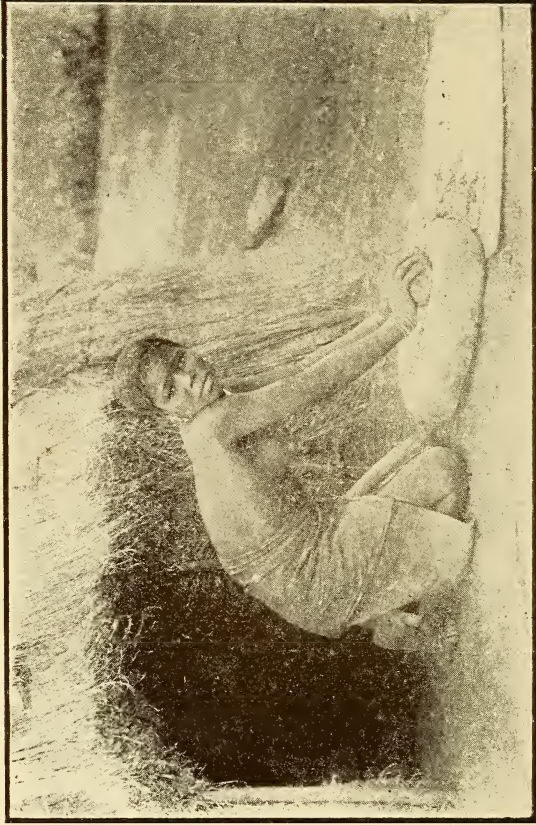


Photo.—J. Wallace Bradley.

Native Girl Grinding Corn.

(See page 19).

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. - - - -	I
HOME LIFE. TRIBAL SYSTEM.	
CHAPTER II. - - - -	14
ARTS AND CRAFTS. IMPLEMENTS AND UTENSILS. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.	
CHAPTER III. - - - -	23
SOME MANNERS, CUSTOMS, SUPERSTITIONS, &c.	
CHAPTER IV. - - - -	36
PROVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS AND FOLK LORE.	
CHAPTER V. - - - -	48
EDUCATION. RELIGION. CONCLUSION.	

FOREWORD.

Having been asked several times by various friends to give a brief account of Native Social Life, I offer the following concise description of some of the manners, customs, arts and crafts, etc., of these aboriginal people.

The record is not, by any means, an exhaustive one; however, I trust that what has been selected from a large mass of material will be of interest to the reader.

S. G. GILKES AITCHISON.

JUNE, 1917.

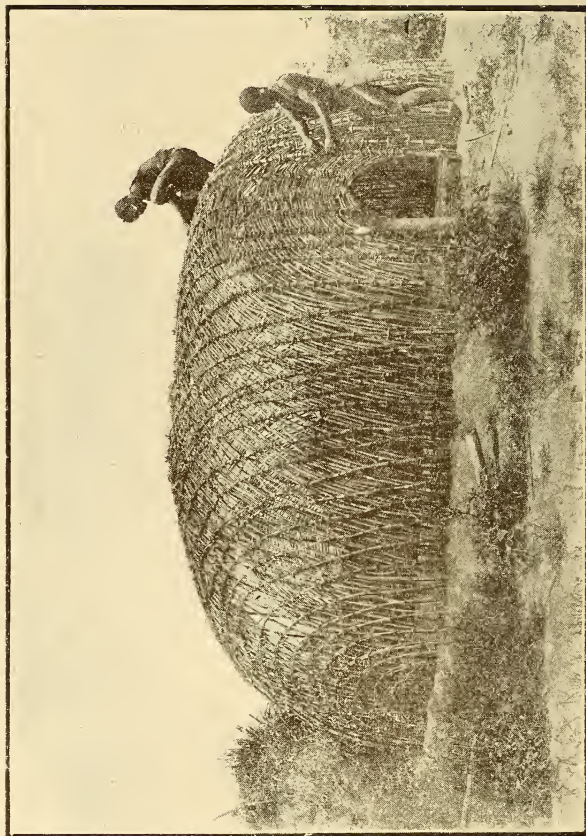


Photo.—J. Wallace Bradley.

Zulu Hut in course of construction.

CHAPTER I.

Home Life. Tribal System.

Nothing that could be written in reference to the home life, manners, customs and superstitions of the South African Natives would ever give the reader an adequate idea of their daily existence; in order to understand something of their mode of living, their outlook upon life, and their original line of thought, it is really necessary not only to reside in the country, but to possess a thorough knowledge of the language. Their multitudinous notions, their conservatism and fatalism, their extraordinary simplicity and childishness on the one hand, their exceptional duplicity, craftiness and diplomacy on the other hand, their peculiar point of view, their skill in some things and incompetence in others, constitute a lifelong study.

Generally speaking, the Native of this country is a peaceful, indolent, pleasure-loving specimen of humanity, but can be very fierce and savage if roused, specially in time of war. According to Dr. J. Deniker, D.Sc., Chief Librarian of the Museum of Natural History, Paris, the Natives of South Africa belong to the "group of Southern Bantus" which is composed of "Kaffir-Zulus to the East, of Bechuanas to the centre, and of Herrero to the West." They possess woolly hair, thick lips, and thick skull. Their powers of observation are good, and they make excellent hunters, trackers, and detectives. They, however, are deficient in ingenuity, and while able, in some measure, to utilise a few of the materials at hand, much is allowed to lie idle for lack of talent. When trained, and kept up to it, the Native is capable of becoming a very useful workman.

Unless taught, he is unable to do much calculation beyond a thousand; many limit their numeration to several hundreds. Counting is done by "tens"; for instance, twenty is described as "two tens," seventy "seven tens," and so forth; the Zulu and Xosa word for one hundred is "ikulu," and a thousand "inkulungwane" (Zulu), and "iwaka" (Xosa). There is no conception of multiplication and division in the Native mind: his arithmetic is confined to addition and subtraction only.

On one occasion a Native was given a bag containing one hundred and eighty potatoes to distribute equally between himself and two members of his tribe. None of the recipients could arrive at a solution of the problem by mentally dividing the number by three, consequently all were sorely perplexed. After holding a prolonged debate on the matter, it was decided that the difficulty could be surmounted by removing the potatoes from the bag one at a time and making three heaps of them, two of the recipients to act as arbiters, to see that each heap received a potato in turn. This was carried out, resulting in a correct allotment!

The Native's idea of distance is usually very vague; he understands nothing of yards or miles, and when on a journey calculates according to the time taken en route from one point to another. When travelling through Pondoland some time ago, on passing a kraal, I had occasion to ask the direction and distance of a certain locality some miles away. On enquiring from some of the children running about as to whether the kraal owners were at home, I was given an emphatic reply in the negative. As this is usually the answer communicated on such enquiries being made by strangers, I dismounted my steed and told the youngsters I would wait. Presently a man cautiously appeared from behind a hut, and wanted to know who I was, from whence I had come, whither I was going, and what my business was? Needless to say, I did not give the solicited information, but renewed my enquiries as to the distance and direction of my des-

tionation. I was informed that it would take me from the time known as "mpondo ze nkomo" (cattle horns) to milking time to reach my goal, the direction being also given.

There is this to be said, that, in regard to topography, the Natives are usually correct: their powers of observation enable them to give a fairly accurate description of any locality with which they are acquainted. (It should be explained that "mpondo ze nkomo" is about 3.30 a.m. in summer and about 5.30 a.m. in winter, and is so named from the fact that anyone, in the vicinity of cattle, stooping down and peering along the horizon eastwards may dimly discern the horns of a bullock a few yards distant against the skyline at that early hour, just before dawn.) (Milking time is about 12 o'clock noon.)

As a rule the Natives in their original state are not in a particular hurry about anything. One day is almost as good as another to them, unless the matter is of vital importance; even then they do not always act as immediately as they should. Hence their surprise at the promptness and punctuality required of them by Europeans.

They are very fond of drawing inferences, but they quite often put their own construction on any occurrence that takes place, and frequently argue from the particular to the general. On one occasion a Native boy was given a basket of oranges by his master to take to a friend. The day being warm, Manzonzo suddenly developed a craving for some of the fruit, and forthwith sat by the wayside to enjoy half a dozen of the delicious oranges. A passer-by, observing the situation, and knowing for whom the fruit was intended, told the rightful recipient of what had taken place. On Manzonzo's arrival, it was discovered that six oranges were missing, and he was at once taken to task, but he stoutly declared that the number in the basket was correct. However, a note which he carried from his master gave him away. A few days later he was entrusted with a similar errand, and, as on the former occasion, he tasted some of the fruit and

route. After refreshing himself, he remembered the note in his pocket, and, on opening it, noticed (as he thought, for he could not read) a number of figures that looked like O's (which he took to mean oranges), and a number of other figures that had the appearance of whip handles with lashes attached. After reasoning things out he inferred that should any of the fruit be missing he would be punished by receiving a whipping! The letter was promptly destroyed, the oranges were delivered, and Manzonzo returned to his master with a message of his own make up, which was to the effect that he had been asked to thank his employer exceedingly for the acceptable fruit!

The Zulus live in round huts made of wicker-work, completely covered over with grass, including roof and walls. The Basutos formerly built dome-shaped huts of clay and small stones, the roof being of the same material as the walls, giving the dwelling the appearance of a large oven. At the present time their huts are roofed with grass, the walls consisting of clay and stones as before. The Amaxosa, like the Zulus, erect wicker-work dwellings, with the difference that the walls are plastered with mud in place of being covered with grass. The wicker-work is composed of wattle (*acacia molissima*) poles, or poles cut from natural forests. These poles are placed upright about two feet apart in a circle, and the younger twigs are interlaced; a small aperture is left in the wall to serve as a window, and a larger aperture near the ground does duty as an entrance; this "doorway," which is usually about three feet high and two and a half wide, is closed by a wicker-work concern of liana (monkey rope), covered with mud. The roof is made of slender rafters placed from wall to wall, like the diameters of a circle, and attached to the walls by plaited grass ropes; these rafters are covered with thatch, which is piled on and bound to the supports by grass cords until the roof assumes the shape of a dome. It is held up by a number of strong upright poles. This precaution is very necessary, as the weight of the thatch would, sooner or later, cause the roof to fall in

if not properly kept up. Before the walls are covered with mud, the hut resembles a large cage. Three coats of plaster are required. The first is daubed on roughly, the second is made of finer mud, and the third consists of clay, which is rubbed over the wall until the latter is quite smooth and glossy. The floor is made of stamped and hardened earth, an open fireplace being formed in the centre. There is no chimney, and in course of time everything in the hut becomes blackened with smoke. It is strange that their eyesight does not appear to suffer, and on the whole the Natives are a very healthy race. Let us enter this place of abode and find out what we can about it. We have to crawl in on hands and knees, owing to the dimensions of the door being somewhat small. At first we are inclined to imagine we have entered a cave; after a few seconds we become accustomed to the light, or rather to the lack of it, and we notice that the master of the house ("umnumzana") occupies a central position near the fireplace. His women folk sit on his right (facing the door). All visitors of the male persuasion sit on the right hand side of the door (on entering), and females on the left. On going into the hut, the visitor utters the salutation: "Sa ku bona!" (We see you!) He then seats himself and remains silent until it pleases the "master of the house" to ask him his business. Conversation is then opened and proceeds freely. The Native ordinarily has good conversational powers, and can talk on any subject within his knowledge (which is not very wide, to say the least of it!) On the left side of the hut (the side occupied by the women folk), we notice a pile of wood, mats (used for sleeping purposes), wooden pillows, blankets, pots and various utensils. Then we observe that a space has been cleared, and several calves and kids are tethered to wooden pegs driven into the floor. Fowls and ducks take up their abode on this side of the hut, and exchange courtesies with each other. Hence we come to the conclusion that the Native erects his abode for more purposes than one. It is his store-room, lumber-room, bedroom, dining-room, sitting-room, dairy,

calves' house, poultry run, and so forth. About thirty yards from this dwelling, a small hut is put up, called the "unyango," which is used exclusively for storing grain, pumpkins, etc., and may be described as the Natives' barn. Further along, eighty or a hundred yards from the central hut, we come across a circular enclosure about twenty to forty yards in diameter, made of branches piled together. In this enclosure, called a cattle kraal, the Native pens his stock for the night. The cattle, horses, sheep and goats are allowed to run to pasture from early morning, being herded by the younger sons. About noon the stock is brought home, the cows are milked, after which all the cattle are allowed to run again till sunset, when they return home once more and are penned for the night. The milk obtained at noon is immediately poured into a gourd, called "ityalo," and allowed to curdle. Very few Natives drink fresh milk. This curdled milk, called "amasi," is very wholesome, and makes an excellent repast when mixed with porridge of corn or maize. The women of the kraal (the term used to describe a Native's homestead in South Africa) are not allowed to interfere in any way with the cattle, nor to have anything to do with the milking of the cows.

The kraal owner's ambition is to possess as many wives as he can afford. Each wife costs eleven head of cattle, one being given to the mother-in-law: this is the only occasion on which she, with her associates, may enter the cattle kraal and select any beast she desires. This animal is called the "ingqutu."

On the whole, the Native does not understand the dignity of labour. In his estimation, work is an unfortunate necessity, to be got through with as speedily as possible. When building a hut (and each kraal head must erect one for every wife), his friends and neighbours are invited to assist him. His wife (or wives, as the case may be) brew beer (called "utywala" or "ijigi") from maize or corn, and the friends are regaled with the beverage liberally, sometimes too much so, resulting in unnecessarily prolonging the building operations!

The ploughing season commences about October (spring), and from this time onwards one may see patches of ground turned over here and there, of about five or six acres in extent to a kraal, seldom more. Natives understand very little about fertilising or thoroughly preparing the soil for crops. The ground is simply turned over, the seed thrown in, and covered up. Later on the gardens are weeded, and this part of the work falls principally to the women.

When the crops are in process of ripening, the young people spend most of their time in the fields for the purpose of scaring away numerous birds which are very destructive to the maize and millet. Tiny wicker-work huts (called "amapempe"), covered over entirely with long grass, are temporarily set up, one for each garden, in which the "bird-scarers" take shelter when a shower of rain comes on, or during a hail-storm. The birds are kept off the crops by various cries and shouts. On their appearance the names of the different birds are called out and repeated several times, e.g., "Hobe! hobe! hobe!" (dove or pigeon), "nomyayi! nomiyayi! nomiyayi!" (rook), and so forth. The following device is also used. A long supple stick, tapering to a point, is selected; on the thin end a small pellet of clay is moulded, the rod is grasped in the hand by the other end, and the pellet is thrown into the flight of sparrows or pigeons by being switched into the air. The birds immediately rise, only to settle again in another part of the field, where they once more receive a pelting. This process goes on every day for several weeks, until the corn ripens, when it becomes too hard for the "fowls of the air" to injure. The variety of crops cultivated is not very large, and great conservatism is exhibited in regard to the introduction of any new vegetable. Maize, which constitutes the staple food of the country, millet, pumpkins, calabashes, sweet potatoes, Kaffir beans, a kind of tuberiferous herb called "idumbe," and several other plants make up the sum total of their ambition in this respect. They have no desire to cultivate the cabbage, or any of that class of annual. However, the round potato is becoming more

popular. Tobacco is grown and well cured. The leaves are dried in the sun and pressed together, forming a gigantic cigar, about three feet long and four to six inches in diameter, the whole being covered by a piece of Native matting. This "cigar" is dissected, and a little taken from it as occasion arises. The majority of Natives are exceedingly fond of snuff, which is made by grinding the tobacco leaves between two stones, a little powdered aloe ash being added to give it a flavour. Quite a number indulge in smoking, some using tobacco and others preferring hemp. Unfortunately the latter shrub invariably produces a state of stupor, the effect being somewhat similar to that obtained by smoking opium, but in a very much milder form.

About June or July reaping commences, and all hands turn out to assist in this interesting procedure. The cobs of maize are pulled off the stalks, the heads of millet are cut away and thrown into a sledge. The sledge is made from the forked branch of a tree (to serve as runners), and looks like two sides of a triangle. At the apex a "reim" or thong of ox-hide is attached, to which is fastened the chain and yokes. On the two sides of the triangle is placed a wicker-work concern, which has the appearance of a large basket. The cobs of maize, heads of corn, pumpkins, etc., are put into this "basket," and the whole conveyance is dragged over the hills from the garden to the kraal by four or six oxen. The sledge slips easily over the grass, and on going down hill it sometimes overtakes the cattle. I have, on several occasions, travelled a few miles over broken country in one of these "vehicles," and it has been most interesting to watch the way in which the driver manipulates his "steeds." The oxen are attached to the sledge by means of a central chain and yokes, two oxen to a yoke, one on each side of the chain. A small boy runs in front of the foremost oxen, leading the team by a leather thong.

Come with me and let us travel a short distance in this extraordinary conveyance. The oxen are attached



Photo—J. Wallace Bradley.

Native Wedding Party, showing beadwork, etc.

(See page 23).

and all is ready. We are asked to take our seats! There are no "seats," consequently we sit on the "floor" of the vehicle. "Kulungile Mtyayeli, ma si suke!" (All right, driver, let us start!) Then with a series of yells that no European can exactly imitate, "Yek—yehe—heyi! Hoho! Momff! Sayimane! Jærlut Qude! Qaqa! Yolula mfana!" and with a crack of the whip we are off! Never fear, the pace is safe (not more than three miles or so an hour, more often less!); we are climbing, and the patient beasts take us up a steep ascent of about one foot in eight. The driver knows his steeds and talks to them in gutterals and clicks which seem to have the desired effect. Now we are on a plateau, and the sledge slips gaily over the grass. We shall soon have to descend. Our driver calls out: "Qinani ke!" (Be on the alert!) The next moment we are sliding down the slopes, running almost parallel with the cattle. Hope we don't strike a stone! Thump! Crack! The chain has snapped, and the cattle run on by themselves. Meantime the sledge, borne on by the impetus, slides along at a great pace. "Hold on there! A ditch this time!" Bump! Over the rickety concern goes. The driver stops the oxen, and with much alarm depicted on his swarthy countenance says: "Wawu! yini pela! Ni sindile na?" (Oh! what is the matter? Are you safe?); to which we reply: "Hai, kusalungile—asi tatele kwakona!" (It is alright—let us proceed!) The oxen are again hitched up, and off we go. The ride is full of minor experiences, and we are specially struck with the manner in which a small river is negotiated. In go the cattle and sledge, the water almost covers our conveyance, but—mirabile dictu—we are dry! How is this? Why, the sledge has taken the ford without us, and we cross over on stepping-stones. One has to be fairly nimble, otherwise a false step might result in a cold bath. This would not mean much to our driver, for his clothing is somewhat scanty! The Natives in their original state wear very little clothing in the summer: a loin cloth or kilt, with an "umtya" (a kind of sporran), made of strips of brayed hide, and a

light blanket over the shoulder are considered sufficient. Beads are looked upon with much pleasure by the youths and maidens, and several ornamental head-pieces are made from these. Later on I shall again refer to "bead-work."

The little Native boys usually run about in all their pristine beauty, except on a cold winter's day, when they are to be seen with a sheepskin round them (called "ixakato"), the woolly side being next to the wearer. The baby girls also go about in Nature's garb, except for a tiny sporran made of beads. When the children reach the age of about four or five years they are given a cotton blanket to wrap round themselves. This article of clothing is, in most cases, liberally smeared over with red clay (or initiated) before being donned by the proud possessor. On hot summer days the Natives very often daub themselves over with a coating of the same kind of clay used for the initiation of the cotton blanket, to prevent their bare skin being blistered by the sun's rays. On the whole they feel the cold intensely, much preferring the heat of the summer to the chilly weather that prevails during winter.

Brayed skins were formerly used as clothing, but at the present time the men often wear woollen, and the women, cotton blankets obtained from a local trader. The cultivation of the hair or wool is also an important item. The Pondo women have each strand of hair rolled in red clay and fat, making the head look as though it were covered with long rat tails. The men sometimes have their hair and beards plaited and bound with thin strips of palm leaf or grass. The elders or kraal owners, when above the age of about forty-five years, often wear a tuft of feathers or a head-ring (called "isicoco").

A bride wears a head ring of white beads, and she is allowed to adorn herself thus for about three years after the marriage. The "wedding dress" or costume assumed on such auspicious occasions is rather conspicuous by its absence in regard to clothing, and by

its generosity in beads, iron rings, armlets, anklets and various other ornaments.

As stated above, a Native's ambition is to be the husband of several wives, to be the head of a large family, and to be the "umnumzana" (the master), in every sense, of his kraal. His children are not burdened by too rigid a system of discipline to say the least of it. The young girls nurse the babies and assist in the house generally; the boys herd the cattle, help with the ploughing and planting, and are expected to make themselves useful when any work happens to be necessary. The older boys and young men as a rule make their younger brothers wait on them, fetch and carry, and perform the drudgery part of any procedure. For instance, on a cold wet afternoon they will send the small boys to fetch up the calves. Or should they have forgotten to pen up the sheep or goats, or shut the kraal gate, or feed the fowls, or what not, the small boys are made to carry out these duties, more especially on a cold foggy evening, when it is far more comfortable to sit round the fire smoking hemp ("insangu") than to be exposed to the weather. Sometimes the young "fags" rebel and secretly complain to their father, the kraal head, who, generally speaking, is very fond of his children, specially the younger members of the family. As a result of the complaint, things are made rather uncomfortable for the "elder brothers," who find it better not to shirk their duties for some time to come. As a rule, Native parents are very affectionate towards their children, and the young people themselves love their homes, their relatives and their surroundings. They are allowed a considerable amount of freedom, and usually live together in peace and harmony.

When the "umnumzana" becomes straitened for "funds," especially shortly before the tax-collection, he sends his boys out to service. They, however, must not work too hard, or stay away from home too long! Six months is the average time one may expect a Native boy to remain in service. If not too far distant he must visit his home about once a month, or

thereabouts, to show that he has not lost interest in his people. Should any of his relatives become ill, whether a great-grandfather, or even a remote cousin, he must be allowed to immediately proceed to the kraal of the indisposed relative, in order to exhibit his concern and sympathy. Failing this, he lays himself open to being accused of producing, in some occult manner, the malady from which his relative is suffering.

The Native thoroughly appreciates and respects a kind, sympathetic and just employer, but is inclined to look upon the one who allows his servant to behave badly as a simpleton!

The Native's idea of integrity and morality is extremely hazy. Very often, in his estimation, the sin is in being found out, not in the act itself! Hence he is frequently found to be somewhat economical with the truth! His morals, too, are very crude. However, under the influence of the Gospel, the Natives are becoming more enlightened and better instructed. And while one recognises this, yet it is unwise, at the present stage of their development, to trust them too implicitly. There seems, in a large number of cases, to be a limit to their capacity for moral endurance.

Tribal System.

Each Native Tribe is under a Chief, who is responsible to the local Magistrate for the good behaviour of his subjects. He is assisted in his administration of justice by a number of "privy councillors" or "indunas," whose duty it is to report any occurrence of note to the Chief. The tribes are made up of "clans" or "sections," each clan being given a distinguishing "nomen," something after the manner of the Scotch clans, e.g., Clan Stuart, etc. The clan name is called "isibongo," and may be used by all members of the same clan as a surname. The Native Locations are divided up into a number of wards, each being under the supervision of an "isibonda" or member of council, who is expected to see to the welfare of those

directly under his charge. The young men are responsible to the "umnumzana" or head of the kraal; he in turn is accountable to the "isibonda," who reports to the "indunas" (privy councillors), and thus the matter is taken before the ruler. However, any member of a tribe, man or woman, may state his or her case directly to the Chief, should he or she wish to do so. The custom is for the Chief to be selected from among the sons of the deceased ruler, the eldest son of the principal wife being the one usually chosen. Consequently a Chief's eldest son seldom inherits his father's position, as the chief wife is invariably taken late in life, or at any rate not until after the ruler has become the father of several children.



CHAPTER II.

Arts and Crafts. Implements and Utensils.

Musical Instruments.

ARTS AND CRAFTS.—As stated in another chapter, although the Native is not ingenious enough to be able to utilise many of the materials at his disposal, yet he has the ability to make use of some.

WOOD AND BONE CARVING.—Some of the carving in wood and bone is very skilfully done, and exhibits great care. Such articles as wooden pillows, walking sticks, low stools, earrings, tobacco pipes, etc., are produced from the different kinds of timber that grow in the natural forests of the country. Snuff spoons, combs, and a variety of ornaments are made from copper or iron wire, which is obtained from a trader. The wire is twisted round a strand of horse hair and joined together, thus making in the eyes of the youths and maidens very becoming additions to the dress. Bracelets, armlets and anklets are also made from iron by the blacksmith and polished with a smooth stone. Bead work is also very much prized by the young people, a “dandy” or “belle” adorned with the various articles produced, presents, in the estimation of the less fortunate ones, a spectacle much to be envied.

POTTERY.—This work is principally in the hands of the women folk, who become very dexterous in producing water urns, beer pots, drinking cups, and other vessels from clay. The material is carefully chosen, then worked up into a soft mass, which is made into the vessel desired. After the usual shaping and drying

in the sun, the article is baked by being placed in a hole in the ground, dry twigs and wood heaped over, and a fire kept up until the vessel is ready.

GRASS WEAVING.—This is also in the hands of the women, although the men are often quite skilful in the art. Sleeping and eating mats, baskets, belts, and a number of useful things of that kind are produced by weaving different varieties of grass and reeds. Palm leaf plaiting also comes under this heading, and such articles as hats, beer strainers, baskets, etc., are made from the leaf of the palm tree.

BRAYING AND TANNING.—This is principally accomplished by the men, and the brayed skins or hides are used for a number of purposes, such as skirts for the women, "sporrans" for the men, bags, hats, sandals, whips, etc. To make leather thongs for fastening cattle to the yoke, etc., an ox hide, after having been dried by being pegged out in the sun for several days, then steeped in water for two or three weeks, is cut into long strips, which are joined together and suspended over a pole placed across two upright ones at about fifteen feet from the ground (the perpendicular poles are usually erected about ten feet apart). The strips of hide are weighed down and rendered taut by a heavy stone, to which all are attached by means of a leather thong tied round the stone. A long pole is then put through a loop in the leather thong. The operator seizes the other end of the pole and walks round in a circle (the suspended stone being the centre, and the two vertical poles the circumference), until the strips are twisted together and form a great knot. The staff is then rapidly withdrawn from the loop, the artisan retiring precipitately to avoid a blow from the whirling mass of cords, which unwinds itself with great speed, the action producing in time a rounded even surface on the thongs. This process of "winding and unwinding" is kept up for about three weeks, two hours or so a day being devoted to the work. At the end of the period the thongs, about ten or twelve to

fifteen feet in length (called reims), which are well greased during the process of manufacture, are ready for use.

BLACKSMITH.—The Native blacksmith was formerly in much demand, the manufacture of assegais (spears), the mending of pots, ploughs, etc., being his specialities. He has never aspired to the dignity of waggon-making, etc., his principal work being as referred to above. At the present time Native boys become apprenticed to the Missionary blacksmith or carpenter in the larger educational institutes where industrial training is gone in for, and some of these boys eventually become very creditable workmen. However, in writing of the Native blacksmith, I refer particularly to him in his original state, apart from any civilising tendency. The productions of his forge were somewhat crude, but he generally excelled in the making of spears. The iron used was smelted by the blacksmith himself. The ore was placed in a trench, over which a huge fire of wood was made and kept up until the metal was extracted. The most skilful workmen of the tribe were often appointed blacksmiths to the Chief.

THE SMITHY.—An oblong hole, somewhat like an elongated basin, about two and a half to three feet long and a foot deep in the middle, is made in the ground near the cattle kraal. At one end a tiny mound of good clay is erected, with a small hole through the centre. On the side facing the basin the coals are placed, and on the opposite side an ox horn (hollowed out and perforated so as to form a tube) is inserted in the clay. Into the wide end of the horn the necks of two large bags of soft goat skin are introduced and made fast. At the other end of the two "bags" four small rods are attached to the mouth of each so as to enable the operator to hold the ends. These form the bellows, and the blacksmith's assistant, sitting in the middle facing the forge, with the mouth of each bag firmly grasped in each hand, creates a draught by skilfully raising the bellows

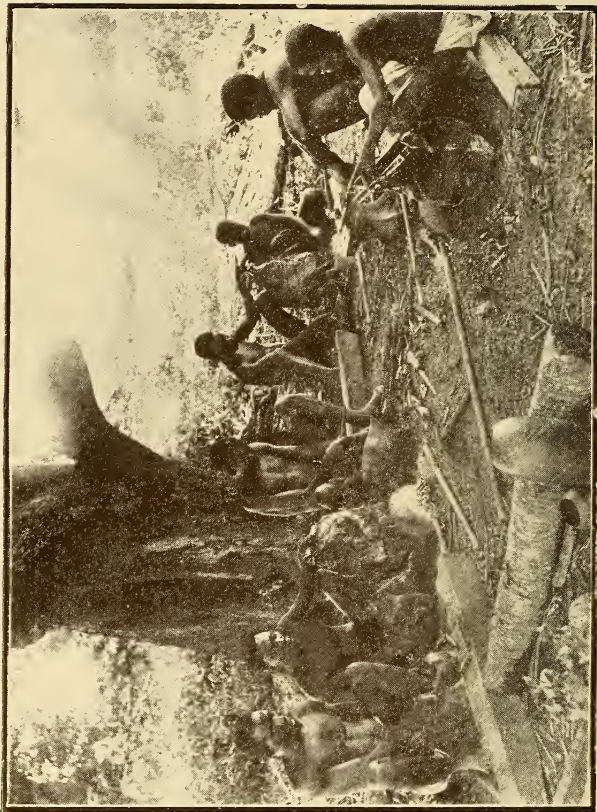


Photo.—J. Wallace Brantley.

Native Artisans at Work, showing forge, bellows, etc.

alternately, opening the mouth while in the act of lifting, and quickly closing before pressing downwards. The blacksmith himself meantime attends to the fire and the irons, etc. His anvil consists of a large piece of ironstone, and a smaller piece serves as a hammer. The tongs are made of a strip of bark from a natural tree. The filament, about fifteen inches long and three or four wide, tapering to a point at each end, is bent double, and assumes the appearance of a gigantic pair of tweezers. As these "tongs" are not very durable, being easily burnt by the red-hot iron from the forge, it becomes necessary to renew them quite frequently. The Native blacksmiths still ply their calling in various parts of the country, but they are not so numerous as in former times.

IMPLEMENTS AND UTENSILS.—The Natives did not possess very much in the way of implements. Formerly their diet consisted of curdled milk (called amasi), flesh and roots, a well-sharpened stick or spear being used to extract the latter. Consequently very few implements were required. Even at the present time they are not very rich in this particular. A plough, with chains and yokes, a sledge, two or three hoes, a spade, a sickle, etc., all obtained from a local trader, are reckoned sufficient. In regard to household utensils, they may be summed up as follows: Two or three cooking pots (originally made of clay), wooden spoons, eating mats (called "izitebe"), on which the meat is served; clay beer pots, palm leaf beer strainers, several knives, etc. There are no names in the language for the various articles employed by Europeans, such as forks, dishes, plates, cups, etc. The words for all these have been Kaffirised, e.g., "imfoloko" (from fork), "isipuna" (from spoon), the Kaffir word is "ukezo" (Zulu), or "igxebeka" (Xosa), which is used to designate a large wooden spoon used for porridge, etc., "indishi" (from dish), "impuleti" (from plate), and so forth. The Natives are quite astonished to find such a variety of utensils used in a European home, and many of the

articles employed have never been seen by them before. On one occasion a boy who had never come across a wheelbarrow was given a lot of cabbage plants by his employer to take to a friend in the machine. Not knowing how to propel the barrow, Lagxikileka with great difficulty lifted the concern bodily on to his head and attempted to carry it loaded with cabbage plants to his destination! He was soon shown his mistake! Native women become very skilful in carrying loads on their heads, and it is quite a common sight to see them returning home from gathering firewood with a heavy bundle of faggots, about forty to sixty pounds in weight, gracefully balanced on the cranium. A friend of mine, who had recently arrived in the country, was greatly struck with the way in which a native girl carried a large earthenware pot of water in the manner described, walking along a winding path up a steep ascent, without spilling a drop. He was so taken with the performance that he thought he would like to try the same feat. A bucket of water was brought, and the amateur raised it to his head—but alas! He had hardly taken a dozen steps when he lost his equilibrium! A cold shower bath was the result, much to the amusement of the swarthy spectators. Needless to say, the attempt was abandoned!

The assegai, or spear, often did service as a knife, although Native blacksmiths used to make a rough knife (called "isityetye" by the Amaxosa), from a small flat piece of iron, well sharpened and attached to a handle. This rude instrument, besides the assegai, was in constant use. Nowadays knives can be obtained from the local traders, but it is the Native blacksmith who still produces assegais.

Lamps or candles and matches were quite unknown. The only light obtainable was that from the fire made in the centre of the hut, and accompanied by volumes of smoke. Fire was produced by patiently rubbing two sticks (cut from a particular kind of tree) together until the friction caused a spark. One stick was placed horizontally, a small hole being made in the middle to receive the point of the other stick placed at

right angles. The operator put the palms of his hands on each side of the perpendicular rod, and kept up a rapid twirling movement until the heat caused a glow or spark in the horizontal one. This contrivance is called "uzwati."

NATIVE MILL.—A large hollow stone is used for grinding purposes. The grain is placed, a little at a time, in the hollow and reduced to coarse meal by being rubbed backwards and forwards by a smooth round stone, which is just large enough to be comfortably held in the palm of the hand.

GRAIN STAMPER.—The trunk of a small tree is hollowed out to form a basin at one end, and placed on its base. A stamper is made from a piece of wood about three feet long, a large knob being carved at each end, giving the instrument the appearance of a gigantic dumb-bell. The grain is poured into the hollow and mixed with a little water, then stamped with the "pestle" until the husk is removed. When washed, dried, and then boiled, the stamped corn makes a very nourishing and palatable dish.

Pear-shaped calabashes are scooped out (a small opening being made in the neck), and used as bottles to hold curdled milk, water, or gruel made of maize or corn-meal. Brayed skins are also used to make leathern bottles. Gourds are scooped out and used as plates for porridge, etc., although, generally speaking, the Natives eat their porridge out of the same pot which is placed on the floor, the men sitting round in a circle, each dipping his wooden spoon in the pot in turn. A separate pot is given to the women folk, who have their meals together on the left side of the hut in the same manner as the men.

Beer is largely partaken of, which is brewed from maize or millet by soaking the grain in water until it sprouts. The sprouted maize is then dried in the sun, ground in the stone mill described above, and boiled. This is allowed to stand for some time until fermentation takes place, when it is again boiled up and put

into large earthenware pots until ready for use. The process of brewing beer usually occupies a week or ten days. This beverage is intoxicating if indulged in too liberally. It is served in grass baskets (closely woven to prevent leakage), which holds about two quarts. The vessel is placed before the master of the kraal, who partakes of a generous draught. He then hands the measure on to his visitors, each one taking a good long drink, until the "beer pot" is emptied. It is considered a gross breach of etiquette for the kraal head to help his visitors to any repast before first partaking of some of the food or drink himself.

NATIVE AXE.—A piece of smelted iron was placed in the forge by the blacksmith and beaten into the shape of a rough isosceles triangle, the base of which was sharpened, the apex being introduced into a thick wooden handle through which a hole had been burnt to receive the iron. This rough instrument, which somewhat resembled a North American Indian tomahawk, did duty as an axe.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.—While the Natives of South Africa are very fond of music, they are unable to produce much in this way unless trained. Their singing consists of chanting a few words, which are repeated again and again. The tune is made up of a few notes, and these are reiterated much to the gratification of the performers. Ditties are composed on any occurrence that takes place in the home or in the community. Natives delight to chant or sing in company. The girls take the treble, repeating the words of the song and keeping time by clapping their hands or dancing (which is always associated with singing), and the young men join in by humming a base accompaniment. A war song (called "unhogo") is chanted by warriors on their way to battle, and the words usually describe the qualities of the leader, and refer to some deed of valour performed by him on a former occasion.

When trained, the Native Christians are capable of producing very good music, and some of the choirs sing quite acceptably.

The following musical instruments were originally made and used by the natives:—

UGWALI.—This is a wind instrument and is made by selecting a very smooth stick, about three feet in length. After the bark has been peeled off, the rod is left to dry; when ready the sinew of a bullock is tied to one end, and to the other is attached the quill of a rook, through which the sinew is threaded and made taut. Musical sounds are produced by placing the lips on the quill and forcibly inhaling and exhaling the breath, the stick being held at right angles to the face.

UMTYINGO.—This is also a wind instrument and is made from a reed about two and a half to three feet in length, which is hollowed out so as to form a tube, one end being cut at an angle. This end is placed in the side of the mouth and blown into, the first finger being used to stop up the other end, which is opened and shut alternately to allow the emission of sound. This instrument corresponds with the piccolo

UGUMPU.—This is a percussion instrument. A small calabash (scooped out), through which a twisted strand of horsehair is threaded, is tied on the end of a rod. The horsehair is then stretched out and attached to the other end, forming a bow. The player holds the instrument against his chest and produces a low booming sound by tapping the horsehair string with a light rod while opening and shutting the aperture in the calabash with his finger to vary the sound. The word “ugumpu” is now used by the Natives to describe the piano.

INKINGE.—Another wind instrument, very similar to the “ugumpu,” with the difference that the horsehair strand is not threaded through a calabash, but is attached to each end of the stick forming a bow. This instrument is played on by means of a horn plectrum.

UMQANGE.—This instrument may be described as the Native violin. A stem of the stramonium plant

is hollowed out and a smooth well-polished rod inserted. Horsehair is again used and is passed through the hollow tube before the rod is introduced. This strand is rendered taut by being firmly tied to each end, and musical sounds are produced by drawing a thin rod backwards and forwards across the strings.

ISIGUPU.—The drum. A piece of brayed goat skin is stretched over the hollow ends of a large gourd previously prepared by being scooped out and dried. The goat skin is attached to each end of the calabash by means of leather thongs. A long strip of goat's skin is fastened to both sides of the instrument to form a loop, which is used to suspend the drum from the shoulders, and the instrument is played upon by means of ordinary drum sticks, which are selected with great care by the drummer.



CHAPTER III.

Some Manners, Customs, and Superstitions.

The following section may serve, in some measure, to give the reader a glimpse of Native social life.

BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE.—The Zulus and Amaxosa are extremely strict in regard to the laws of consanguinity relating to marriage. Cousins, and even members of the same clan, are not allowed to marry one another. Should such an event take place it would be looked upon as a serious breach of the marriage customs, richly and justly meriting the wrath of the Ancestral Spirits.

It is a well-known fact amongst the Natives that the father of a girl expects to receive compensation for her in the shape of cattle (or an equivalent) when she is given in marriage. A chief's daughter is considered to be of much higher "value" than either that of a "headman" or commoner. A chief may claim fifty or sixty head of cattle for his daughter before he will relinquish his proprietary rights; the usual equivalent, however, is ten head, with a beast which is handed over to the bride's mother, called the "ingqutu." There are also other demands, which vary according to circumstances. These dues are regarded as an acknowledgment to the parents of the bride for the trouble taken in rearing and bringing her up. The "ukucola," or final settlement of the business part of the transaction, takes place after the preliminaries have been settled between the young people themselves. On becoming engaged, the "young lady" proceeds to the kraal of her fiance, where she spends a few days, assisting in the household duties to show her diligence

and skill in "housekeeping." A goat is killed and prepared for her and the friends who accompany her, a feast and a dance take place, then the bride-elect returns home, taking with her a bullock, which is given as a token that she is acceptable to her future father-in-law and his family. Should the engagement be broken off after the young lady's visit described above, she is entitled to two head of cattle as compensation. However, should the arrangement continue to be agreeable to all concerned, the young man periodically visits the lady of his choice at her home; in the meantime the remuneration for his bride, called "lobola," is paid by degrees (which may take some time), until either the transaction is completed or sufficiently advanced for the bridegroom-elect to feel at liberty to ask his prospective father-in-law to allow the wedding to take place as soon as convenient. Should the request be acceded to, the balance of lobola is paid some time after the nuptial knot is tied.

On the day of the ceremony a beast is killed (sometimes two or more, according to the rank either of the bride or bridegroom), and beer is liberally provided. There are no invitations sent out: the news that a wedding ceremony is to take place spreads rapidly enough, and all who wish to attend know they will be made welcome. During the course of the proceedings the bride receives a charge from her people as to how she should conduct herself in her new sphere. After the public acceptance of each other, the wedding feast proceeds, the young people amusing themselves by singing and dancing. At the close of the "reception" the bridegroom takes his departure home, accompanied by a number of friends, and is followed later on in the day by his bride, who is also attended by several of her associates.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.—As a rule the advent of an addition to the family is hailed with great rejoicing, as the Natives long for an increase to the tribal number. The coming event is not dreaded to the extent that it sometimes is by Europeans, and the period of trial,

which usually passes without much danger or trouble, is borne with great fortitude by the expectant mother. Several of the older women of the kraal are in attendance, and unless any untoward circumstance takes place, are able to satisfactorily carry the event through. Should anything of a serious nature occur, a "professional" Native accoucheur is called in. In the event of the child being a boy, the "inkosana yekaya" (the young master of the kraal) is heralded; if a girl, the "umvusi yomzi" (the raiser up of the kraal) is proclaimed. The words "umvusi yomzi" have reference to the fact that on some future occasion ten head of cattle will be received for her!

An infant undergoes the following process of being smoked (called "ukufutwa"). Several varieties of medicinal herbs are placed in an earthenware vessel with some live coals so as to produce a dense smoke, and the child is swayed to and fro in the fumes. This procedure is carried out every morning at sunrise, and is continued until the infant is about six months old. At this period the process is changed, and roots of a medicinal nature are hung round the infant's neck, with pieces of goat or sheep skin. These performances are supposed to protect the child from the machinations of evil spirits. In olden times the father was expected to be absent from home when his children were born. A great chief did not return until the expiration of three months, a headman absented himself for a month, and a commoner for about a fortnight. On the father's return, a great feast (called the "umdhliwa-zandhla") was held, and the child's relatives were expected to bring it presents. Prior to this festival, custom prohibited the father from seeing his child, but, as a matter of fact, many a stolen peep at the infant was taken! In the event of his being caught in the act of admiring his offspring, fines were imposed. These were paid to the old women of the kraal, who were always on the look-out so as not to lose any opportunity that might present itself of obtaining this perquisite! The custom, however, which prohibited the father from being present at the

birth of his child has now become almost entirely obsolete.

Native Doctors.

“WITCH DOCTORS.”—To the Native mind, natural death, except from senile decay, is an impossibility; consequently when death intervenes before a ripe old age the departed one is looked upon as having been under the spell of the “abatakati” (wizards and witches), who are supposed to be continually exercising a malevolent influence over the community. The belief in witchcraft is a very real and definite conviction in the Natives’ mind, and the attendant customs are a constant source of unrest and fear. No matter how ridiculous and absurd the ideas are in regard to this superstition, they are given credence to with an implicit faith worthy of a better object. From childhood to old age the Natives live in habitual apprehension concerning the machinations of some enemy, who is supposed to possess occult powers and to exercise his spell by means of invisible baboons, snakes, dogs, owls, etc., which act as the “umtakati’s” messengers. The “witch-doctor” is the man or woman to whom those resort who have had some misfortune befall them, in order to discover the cause of the illness, the death, the blighted garden, or the sick cattle. Let us follow one who is on his way to the “oracle” referred to. Sometimes he is accompanied by several friends to assist in the proceedings, and it is necessary for him to have a small gift ready to present to the witch-doctor. On approaching the kraal the injured man makes his salutations, and, sitting down in front of the magician, begins his tale of woe. The “doctor” listens attentively, or appears to do so, and, placing his hands on his own head, pretends to be lost in thought for a few minutes. He then makes a shrewd guess as to the purpose of the unfortunate man’s visit. If he is right in his surmise, the party clap their hands and shout “Siyavuma!” (we agree) as loudly as possible; otherwise the word “siyavuma” is pro-

nounced in an undertone, and the clapping is scarcely audible. Should the latter result be produced, the "doctor" at once knows that he has made a mistake, and hastily corrects himself! This time he may receive a hearty assent. He then continues to feel his way by the attitude of his clients, and goes on to refer indirectly to the district from which he chooses to suppose the evil has come, the particular kraal is eventually described, and hints are thrown out as to the identity of the enemy. As a rule a witch-doctor (called "inyanga yokubhula") is careful to find out everybody's business, and usually knows that better than his own. He takes great pains to keep himself in touch with every circumstance and minor occurrence in the district, and it is generally someone with whom his client is at enmity who is chosen by the magician as the supposed perpetrator of the mischief. The suspected person is boycotted, and things are made so uncomfortable for him that he finds it better to remove from the locality. In former times, however (that is, before the advent of British rule), the unfortunate man whom the witch-doctor had selected as the cause of his patron's misfortune would be taken before the Chief, who often passed the sentence of death. This was quickly carried out either by clubbing the victim or throwing him over a precipice, or having his naked body smeared with fat and impaling him on an ant-heap, leaving him there to die a slow death of starvation and torture.

Should the illness or misfortune continue, and the Native herbalist fail to effect a cure, the person on whom the calamity has fallen usually consults another witch-doctor, who will most likely inform his client that the Ancestral Spirits have been displeased and must be propitiated. The magician proceeds to the sufferer's home, and gives the invalid a medicinal herb which he is to place in the mouth of the propitiatory beast. The offering varies according to the wealth and rank of the kraal owner. A man of some standing will sacrifice a bullock, otherwise a white goat is slain. The blood is collected in a vessel and placed at

the far end of the hut opposite the doorway. The Ancestral Spirits are supposed to descend during the night in invisible form and drink the blood; the gall of the slain animal is poured on the head and feet of the patient, and the empty gall bladder is blown out and attached to his head. While this ceremony is in progress prayers are offered to the Spirits requesting the withdrawal of their displeasure from the kraal. In the event of the foregoing rights failing to produce any signs of the patient's recovery, his friends give up all hope, but they continue to apply every imaginable remedy. On the death of the sufferer the fact is proclaimed by the women of the kraal, who give vent to weird cries of grief. The body is speedily tied up in a sitting posture, the chin resting on the knees, and is thus carried to the grave. All the deceased's personal belongings are buried with him. A Chief's grave is kept secret and carefully guarded for about a year after the funeral. Any Native handling a dead body is "unclean" for about a fortnight, and during this period he may not leave his kraal, but must be "doctored" with medicinal herbs.

NATIVE HERBALISTS ("IZINYANGA ZOKWELAPA").—The Native herbalists are the most useful of all so-called "doctors" to the community, for they do possess some knowledge, although very limited, of medicinal herbs. The method, however, by which they are supposed to acquire their fitness for the position shows how strangely superstitious beliefs have become intermingled with practical things. The process by which a candidate is installed into the "doctorate" is called "ukutwasa," lit., "rising anew." In some instances the novitiate (who may be a member of either sex) goes through a long and serious illness, and dreams such dreams as are held by the witch-doctors to prove that the malady has been caused by the Ancestral Spirits. The patient's friends are informed that the disease will not cause death, but will result in the invalid successfully "coming out" as a physician. The ceremony of installing the initiate takes place

either at sunrise or sunset, and all the inmates of the kraal are summoned to witness the proceedings. The groans and cries of the sufferer are supposed to prove that he (or she) is possessed of Spirits which must be speedily appeased. Several white goats are slaughtered, and the blood and gall used as previously described. While the animals are being prepared and the ceremony proceeded with the aspirant is said to be learning from the Spirits what special herbs are to be used in future practice. On his recovery the candidate is ready to be "brought out," a feast and beer drink being held to celebrate the auspicious occasion. The pupil of the "Æsculapian school" now places himself under the care of an experienced herbalist, from whom he receives further instruction in the healing art. In any case, whether the candidate has passed through the illness referred to or not, the latter term of probation is always considered necessary. And one might add that it is just as well, for, after all, this is really the time during which the budding physician does receive his medical training, such as it is!

Native medicine men do not possess much in the way of surgical instruments. Several well-sharpened knives do duty as lancets, and rude probes, scalpels, etc., are manufactured from rough pieces of iron. The Natives are very averse to the amputation of any limb, but they are quite ready to practise phlebotomy, and in a large number of cases the cupping instrument (made from a bullock's horn) comes into use. Teeth were extracted by having the offending molar dug out of the jaw by means of a well-sharpened scalpel; failing this, a spear or any sharp piece of iron was used.

A large number of medicinal herbs are employed, and a decoction is usually made of the leaves, roots or bark. The patient is often dosed without much heed being paid to the exact measure. Sometimes after a potion consisting of a very powerful drug the sufferer succumbs to the effect. Poultices of leaves or bark are used in the case of sprains, sores, local inflammations, etc., with good results. In the case of broken bones,

the limb is set, and splints made from the twigs of a medicinal tree are used.

Under the heading of Native herbalists or medicine men, it will be appropriate to refer to the healer known as the "isangoma." This class of Native "doctor" occupies the front rank of his profession. The "course of training" is similar to that of the ordinary practitioner, with the difference that towards the close of the "curriculum" the candidate for the position of "isangoma" is supposed to receive particular instructions from the Ancestral Spirits qualifying him as a specialist in the art of curing disease by extracting bones, flesh, insects, reptiles, etc., from the body of his patients. After the herbalist has exhausted his skill, the "isangoma" is sent for. He seats himself in front of the sufferer, and makes inquiries as to the symptoms; meantime he mixes up a lump of clay which he has brought with him. When the clay is ready, the "isangoma" proceeds with the operation by placing the plaster on the patient's body at the seat of pain. He tells the invalid that a reptile, an insect, or a piece of bone or flesh is the occasion of the illness, and in a few minutes the cause is to be removed. The "doctor" (who in this case is nothing more than a conjurer) then places his mouth on the plaster, and, to the astonishment of the spectators, appears to draw out the reptile or insect, etc., from the clay. Of course the object produced has been placed either in the plaster or in his own mouth by the magician himself prior to the operation. These "specialists" are also credited with having the power to remove charms from a kraal which have been placed there by an enemy and which are the suspected cause of illness or misfortune.

THE LIGHTNING DOCTOR.—This individual is supposed to possess a knowledge of various herbs which are regarded as having the effect of repelling the elements, and in the event of a person, animal, kraal or garden being struck, he is immediately sent for.

Natives have a great horror of lightning, and any

harm caused by it is invariably attributed either to the machinations of an "umtakati" (wizard) or to the displeasure of the Ancestral Spirits. During a thunderstorm each kraal owner brings out a small bundle of herbs (obtained from the "lightning doctor") and places them in a vessel with a few live coals to produce a dense smoke. The receptacle is put near the door of the hut, and strict silence is observed while the tempest is in progress. Should the storm approach uncomfortably near, the kraal owner selects his lightning assegai (spear), which is reserved for use on such occasions, and, choosing some of the medicinal roots, he sallies forth to view the progress of the weather. Taking a bite from one of the herbs and expectorating in the direction of the approaching storm, he capers about and points vigorously with his spear eastwards, exclaiming "Embo! Embo! Embo!" This may be regarded as a request to the Ancestral Spirits that the storm should pass on and do no damage.

No Native will ever dare to touch the body of any person killed by lightning. Even the friends of the deceased will leave the corpse lying where it fell until the lightning doctor sprinkles his herbs on the body, as well as on those who will perform the obsequies. The same applies to a hut, garden, animal or utensil that may have been struck: nothing will be used or touched prior to the "doctor's" ministrations. About September or October (the beginning of the stormy season) various charms consisting of roots and herbs are placed on the roofs of the huts in every kraal. These "phylacteries" are supposed to have the effect of protecting the dwellings from "Jove's thunderbolts."

THE RAIN DOCTOR.—This "doctor" is looked upon as being able to produce rain, and the office, generally speaking, is hereditary. When rain is needed, Natives from all parts of the district resort to the "rain-maker," bringing with them suitable presents. These usually consist of mealies, corn, tobacco, goats, sheep or cattle, according to the rank of the donor. After

receiving the gifts and hearing the requests for rain, the "doctor" dismisses his clients and proceeds as follows:

He goes down to the nearest river, taking with him a particular kind of ointment that has been specially prepared, the ingredients of which are only known to the "profession." This he smears himself with from head to foot and immerses himself in the water, his head only appearing on the surface. During the immersion prayers are offered to the Ancestral Spirits to look favourably upon the state of the country, the parched up grass and crops, and to consider the future welfare of the tribe, for famine and starvation would necessarily follow the absence of rain. This ceremony over, the "doctor" proceeds home and awaits the expected showers. In the event of no change taking place in the weather, the process is repeated, and may be repeated several times.

Should the Ancestral Spirits still withhold the looked-for moisture, the rain doctor despatches a messenger to the Chief requesting him to order as many of his tribe as possible to attend a "rain dance." A particular locality is chosen, and the saltation is carried on for two or three days, "till the dust from the feet of the sons of those who proceeded from the marsh has ascended to the heavens and touched the clouds." The dancers then disperse to their homes in a hopeful frame of mind. If, however, the drought continues, the "doctor" usually singles out some unfortunate wretch (with whom he may be at variance) as the supposed cause of the Ancestral Spirit's displeasure. In former days the hapless object of the rain-maker's wrath was dealt with in the same manner as an "umtakati" (wizard or witch). It is quite apparent that the "doctor's" reputation is invariably saved by Nature taking her course, the desired showers coming sooner or later!

WAR CUSTOMS.—In former times wars and faction fights were of common occurrence. One tribe would raid another's cattle or spoil another's crops, resulting



A Group of Native Christians,

(See page 33).

in a settlement of the matter by an appeal to arms. Consequently the tribal leaders were careful to have their warriors properly attended to by the army herbalist with a view to rendering them invulnerable in the event of hostilities taking place.

The ceremony was carried out in the following manner:—The warriors were summoned by the Chief to the “great place” (“kwomkulu,” as the Chief’s kraal is called), and on arrival they formed a large circle in the space between the cattle pen and the principal hut. The Chief, his councillors, and the army herbalist occupied the centre of the circle, which consisted of fighting men in the following order: First rank, men armed with assegais and carrying oval-shaped shields made from raw ox hide; second rank, mounted men armed with six assegais carried in a pouch slung over the back (latterly the second rank carried guns); third rank, armed as the first rank, with assegais and shields. After reviewing his troops, the Chief ordered a black bull to be slaughtered and prepared. The beef was eaten by the men-at-arms with small pieces of human flesh (being that of some victim taken captive at a former victory) and medicinal herbs. The army surgeon then sprinkled a decoction (made from various roots and leaves) over the troops and their horses, with a bunch of twigs. Subsequent to this process, the Chief exhorted his men, giving them advice as to how they were expected to conduct themselves on the field of battle. At the close of the address a great war dance generally took place.

An army, however confident in the skill of its leader, and in spite of everything being in favour of an attack, would shrink back and return home without striking a blow if the omen were unpropitious. During a campaign, omens, propitious or otherwise, depended upon what may have been revealed either to the army “surgeon” or to the Chief’s witch-doctor by the Ancestral Spirits. For instance, it was possible for an occurrence that would be regarded as a particularly favourable omen by one tribe, to be looked upon as an extremely inauspicious sign by another.

NATIVE MODE OF FIGHTING.—The attack was generally made in close order, the opposing columns advancing in crescent shape, and on approaching the enemy the two "horns" of the semi-circles performed a rapid encircling movement with a view to enveloping the foe. Assegais would be hurled at a distance of about sixty yards. The two forces at length closed up, and a hand to hand struggle took place until one or the other gave way. There is a superstition that the swelling of bodies killed in a fight will produce a similar effect on the slayers, consequently Natives did not show much mercy in battle: the victors butchered the vanquished right and left, and ripped open the bodies of the dead and wounded.

Three kinds of spears were used: the stabbing assegai, employed at close quarters; the throwing assegai, for use at a distance; and the hunting assegai, used in the chase. There is also the lightning assegai, the use of which has been described above.

SOME SUPERSTITIONS.—Unfortunately the most absurd convictions have taken root in the Native mind, and the various superstitions believed in cling to these people from youth to old age. It may be said, however, that as the Natives are brought under the influence of the Gospel, and as they become more enlightened, these senseless ideas are given considerably less credence to.

The following are some examples:—

An owl hooting near a homestead or settling on a hut, at night, indicates that sickness, death, or some misfortune is about to visit that kraal.

Wizards, witches and thieves use the heart and internals of an owl to render themselves invisible. The parts of the birds mentioned are dried, ground to powder, and the wizard or thief lances himself, inserting the powder into the wounds. This is supposed to enable the one who undergoes the process to carry out his evil work noiselessly and without being seen.

A certain kind of moth, something like the "goat moth" or "*Cassus ligniperda*," entering a hut, is an

indication that an "umtakati" (wizard) is about to cast a spell on one of the inmates.

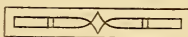
Should a sacred heron ("utekwane") settle on a hut, that dwelling is expected to be burnt down sooner or later.

Anyone killing a sacred heron is sure to merit the wrath of the Ancestral Spirits, who will manifest their displeasure by causing sickness or some accident to fall upon the slayer.

There is a peculiar variety of grasshopper known by the Natives as the "umkonya." This insect is supposed to drain the cows of their milk on hot summer evenings, and after having done so produces a loud chirruping. It certainly does give vent to a lusty sound: one would hardly believe that so small an insect could make such a noise. But the story about the milk being drained from the cows is mere nonsense.

"UTIKOLOSHE."—This is the name given to a supposed mischievous sprite or "puck," who lives in the water, witherto he was banished on account of his amorous intrigues. He is said to be a dwarf, and goes about playing tricks on people, but is quite invisible except to children about six or seven years of age. He is also supposed to be employed as the messenger of a wizard, bringing charms to a kraal and exerting an evil influence on the inmates.

Generally speaking, Natives do not care to go about alone at night, and if obliged to do so they will sing and shout on their way to make it clear to the community that they are not on any evil intent.



CHAPTER IV.

Proverbial Expressions and Folk Lore.

It might be of interest here to refer briefly to the structure of the Language.

The Native Language of South Africa is composed of several dialects, the Zulu language being generally regarded as the principal variety. The chief peculiarity of the language is its alliteration, the noun being the predominating element in the sentence, the form of its prefix influencing the subordinate parts of the subject and predicate.

The following sentences are examples:—

Bati be sa hamba labo bantu ba bona ukuti ba kahlekelwe yindhlela. (While travelling, those people discovered that they were lost.)

The noun *abantu* (people) belongs to the first class, class, the representative prefix of which is *i* (*inkomo*) (*umuntu*), in the singular, and *aba* (*abantu*) in the plural.

Zonke izinkomo mazi buye zi nikwe ukudhla kwazo.

(Let all the cattle come back and be given their fodder.)

The noun *izinkomo* (cattle) belongs to the third class, the representative prefix of which is *i* (*inkomo*) in the singular, and *izi* (*izinkomo*) in the plural.

The different parts of speech are:—

The noun (which has been divided by most grammarians into eight classes in the singular, and five in the plural, each class with its own representative prefix), pronoun (personal, relative, interrogative, demonstrative, and possessive), verb, adjective (used either as an epithet or as a predicate), adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.

Pronunciation:—

A	is	pronounced	like	a	in	the	word	father.
E	„	„	„	a	„	„	„	pane.
I	„	„	„	ee	„	„	„	keen.
O	„	„	„	aw	„	„	„	saw.
U	„	„	„	oo	„	„	„	loop.

There are three principal click sounds in the language, represented by the letters C, Q, and X, with various modifications. The C click is a dental one, and is formed by placing the tongue against the front teeth and precipitately removing it. The Q click is a palatal one, and is produced by putting the tongue against the roof of the mouth, and suddenly forcing it downwards. The X click is a lateral one, and is made by placing the tongue against the side of the mouth and quickly withdrawing it. The other letters of the alphabet are pronounced as in English, with the following exceptions:—

G is always hard (like G in the word gag).

H is pronounced like H in the word hat.

R is pronounced as a hard guttural.

The combinations hl, dhl, sh, tsh, and the letter r, as well as the clicks, have no EXACT equivalent in English. Consequently these sounds should be learnt from a linguist.

Proverbial Expressions and Idiomatic Phrases.

The Natives possess some very apt sayings, many of which are almost similar to the aphorisms of our own language.

The following are some examples:—

“I sal’ ukutyelwa si bona ngo mopu.” Lit.: The intractible (man) sees by a bloodstain. Meaning: One who will not listen to advice must learn by experience.

“Inkuku i sikwe umlomo.” Lit.: The fowl has had its mouth (beak) severed. Meaning: He has nothing to say for himself. He is speechless.

“Akuko tendele ipandel’ enye.” Lit.: No partridge scratches or scrapes (the ground) for another. Meaning: Every man for himself.

“Inhloko yake i lukuni.” Lit.: His head is hard. Meaning: He is an obstinate fellow.

“Azidonsi ngoku donsa kunye.” Lit.: (The oxen) do not pull together. Meaning: The parties do not agree.

“Ziwelene izindonga.” Lit.: The walls have collided. This expression is used to describe a quarrel between people of some importance.

“Ziwile izintaba.” Lit.: The mountains have collapsed. Used in reference to the downfall of any notable person. Compare: How have the mighty fallen!

“Umkwezeli wabuyelwa si sikuni.” Lit.: The fuel has come back upon the stoker. Meaning: The one who tends the fire has got burnt. Compare: His sin has found him out.

“Izulu li matumb’ entaka” (Xosa). Lit.: The sky resembles the internals of a bird. This expression is often used to describe a dull overcast day.

“Ngisoliwe.” Lit.: I have been found fault with. Said by anyone suffering from a rash.

“Ma ngi ku lume indhlebe.” Lit.: Let me bite your ear. Meaning: I have something to tell you. I wish to speak to you privately.

“Ngomile amate.” Lit.: My mouth (saliva) is dry. Meaning: I am greatly astonished.

“Upike wa kabalaza.” Lit.: He denied (it), kicking out vigorously. Meaning: He flatly denied it. He vehemently repudiated it.

“Ube ’mehlo ’mahle!” Lit.: May you have beautiful eyes! Said to a person or party about to set out on a hunting or other expedition. Meaning: Good luck to you!

“Unomtamo omde.” Lit.: He has a long mouthful. Meaning: He is a big eater.

“Ukutyaya pansi.” Lit.: To strike below. Meaning: To miss the mark.

“Ukuhlanganisa izinhloko.” Lit.: To put heads together. Meaning: To talk a matter over. To hold a council. Compare: Two heads are better than one.

“Ukubodhla emswaneni.” Lit.: To cry or shout in the contents of an animal’s paunch. Meaning: To complain after the event. To give advice too late. To carry old news. Compare: To shut the stable door after the horse is stolen.

“Ukukala nga liso linye.” Lit.: To shed tears with one eye. Meaning: Feigned grief. “Crocodile tears.”

“Isandhla sake side.” Lit.: His hand is long. Meaning: He is a thief. Compare: Light-fingered.

“Inkomo yeyele ngomkono.” Lit.: The beast (cow) has become bogged by its shoulder. (An animal cannot easily disengage itself when caught by the fore leg.) This expression is used of anyone who has seriously compromised himself, or of any unfortunate occurrence which cannot easily be rectified.

“Uli kade bona.” Lit.: He is one who has seen (things) for a considerable time. Meaning: A man of experience. An old hand.

“Inja i botshwe nenkanga.” Lit.: The dog is tied to a rush. Said of a mean niggardly person who will not even allow his dog to be loose while he (the owner) is at meals (in case the dog might want some of the food). Meaning: An avaricious man.

“Itole elihle li ketwa ku sa kanya.” Lit.: A well-favoured yearling is chosen while there is light. Meaning: It is well to strike while the iron is hot. Compare: To make hay while the sun shines. To make the most of one’s time.

“Izulu liya hloma.” Lit.: The heaven is arming. This expression is used to describe the gathering together of thunderclouds. Meaning: A storm is brewing.

“Uvuma zonke.” Lit.: One who agrees to everything. Meaning: One who has no mind of his own and is easily led. Indecision of character. Changeable.

“Ukuvuma ngempumulo.” Lit.: To acquiesce with the nose. Meaning: A false assent. Pretended affirmation.

“Ngoku tyaya, mfana, ngi buye ngi cele ugwayi ku yihlo!” Lit.: I shall thrash you, boy, then I shall go and ask your father for snuff. Said to a naughty boy whose punishment would be amply endorsed by his father. According to Native etiquette, the giving of a pinch of snuff is a sign of friendship and good understanding; consequently, no Native would dare to ask for snuff from a father whose child he had undeservedly punished.

FOLK LORE.—Formerly the Natives possessed no literature whatever, consequently stories were handed down from generation to generation verbally. At the present time, the only literature that exists in the language is that which has been compiled by the various linguists and missionaries. The following will give the reader some idea of the tales that were recited by these people over their fires. The narratives vary in the different dialects, but they are all from the same root. In translating I have endeavoured to be as literal as possible, but owing to the peculiar idioms of the language it is often necessary to employ a free rendering.

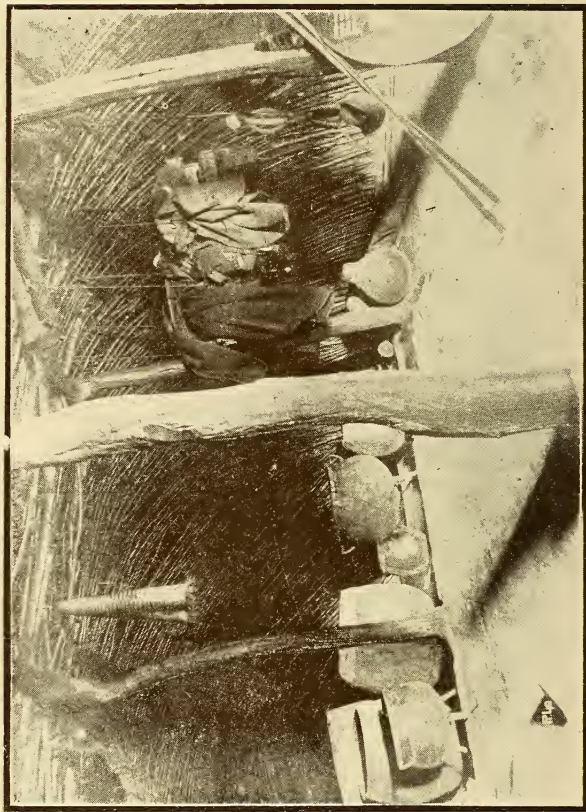


Photo.—J. Wallace Bradley.

Interior of Native Hut.

Mbizeni and his Wonderful Spoon.

Once upon a time a man called Mbizeni possessed a wonderful "utiniko" (wooden spoon), which was much bigger than the other spoons, and enabled the proud possessor to obtain a larger helping of food than the rest of the family.

Mbizeni warned his wife never to use the spoon. One day he visited a neighbour's kraal where a feast was being held. From this kraal Mbizeni sent a young lad to milk his cows for him. The boy carried out his errand while Mbizeni's wife prepared "izinkobe" (boiled mealies) by rubbing them between two stones so as to be ready for mixing with the milk to make "umvubo" (curdled milk and mealies).

Now, as there were only the two spoons in the hut, when they sat down to the meal, Mrs. Mbizeni used her husband's and gave her own to the boy. At the very first mouthful the "utiniko" stuck in Mrs. Mbizeni's throat, and although the lad laboured hard to pull it out, was unable to do so.

While this was going on some wild pigeons settled on the fence near by. In his distress the boy rushed out of the hut exclaiming: "Oh! Whatever shall I do?" The pigeons asked what was the matter, and, on being told, they all went into the hut together and tried their best to remove the spoon, but to no purpose. The boy then begged the birds to fly at once to Mbizeni and let him know what had happened. They forthwith went off on this errand, and as they arrived at the next kraal, the boys there came out with knobsticks to throw at them. The pigeons thereupon sang a chorus which was to the effect that Mbizeni's wife had his "utiniko" sticking in her throat, and no one could extract it but himself.

The birds were told that Mbizeni was at a kraal further on. They immediately proceeded thither and sang as before. Mbizeni, hearing what had occurred, instantly hastened home, where he at once extracted the spoon from his wife's throat. He then gave her a great tirade for having used his "utiniko" and

cautioned her never to do so again, as her greediness might end her life. Mrs. Mbizeni then suggested that if it were greedy for *her* to eat with his spoon, it was greedy for *him* to use it!

Being a bad-tempered man, Mbizeni flew into a passion and threw his charmed spoon at his wife, but fortunately missed her. However, the "utiniko" hit against one of the posts of the hut and was shattered to pieces. One of the fragments flew across the room and struck the baby girl on the face, causing a nasty scar, which disfigured her for life.

So Mbizeni, as a punishment for his hastiness, lost his wonderful spoon and injured his little girl. The unsightly face of his child was a constant reminder of what he had done. He bitterly regretted his rashness, and never again did he allow his temper to get the better of him.

The Avarice of Nduna.

Many years ago an orphan girl named Mandaliso lived with her married sister and took care of the two little children. One day her brother-in-law, Nduna, asked her why she did not marry? He put this question because, being extremely avaricious, he hoped to obtain the cattle that would be paid for her by the young man of her choice.

Mandaliso replied that she loved her sister and her little nephew and niece too much to believe that she could be happy anywhere else. She continued to look after the two children till they were grown up. Then another little one (a baby girl) came into the family, and Mandaliso loved the new arrival even more than she did the other two. Going out and coming in she always carried the child on her back, and would never allow it out of her sight.

One day when it was Mandaliso's turn to collect firewood, the baby became very fretful, and the mother arranged with her sister to leave the child behind. Accordingly Mandaliso went off alone to a large wood

on the banks of a river, where she began gathering faggots. While in the act of picking up sticks she heard a voice from the river calling out: "Come here! Come here! I want to speak to you!"

As she approached the bank the voice continued, and the following conversation took place:—

"Are you still living with your sister?"

"Yes! I am!"

"And are you happy there?"

"Oh yes! Very happy indeed!"

"And what is it that makes you so very happy there?"

"I am happy because I love my sister and her children dearly and do not wish to leave them."

"But do you not want to get married some day and have a home of your own?"

"No! I do not! What happiness could marriage ever bring me?"

"Don't you know that you belong to a family of high rank, and that your brother-in-law, who is a very mean man and more fond of his cattle than of his family, does not treat you as he should?"

"That may be, but I am perfectly contented as I am."

"Now I want to make it clear to you that this is really your proper home and sphere. I am your grandfather, and here are your father and mother."

At these words Mandaliso was drawn into the river, where she found her grandparents and parents living in a beautiful palace under the water.

Night came on, and as she did not return home, her sister became anxious about her and begged Nduna to set out in search of the lost one. At first he was not at all willing, and said there was one of his cattle that needed his attention. However, he eventually yielded to his wife's entreaties, and started off. After plodding

on for some time he came across a bundle of firewood that had been collected by his sister-in-law. This discovery greatly alarmed him, and while casting about in his mind as to his next move, the grandfather called out from the river: "Don't be afraid; Mandaliso has not been spirited away; she was led here because this is really her rightful place. We shall send her back to you after we have brought your wife and children here by enchantment, for both your spouse and your sister-in-law are great people. As you do not treat them kindly, we are going to take them away from you."

In the meantime the baby girl was so fretful that her aunt, although far away, felt there was something wrong, and she asked the grandfather to allow her to return home for a short visit so as to comfort the child. Leave was willingly granted, and next morning Mandaliso commenced her journey. On arrival she found some young girls belonging to the establishment trying to quieten her little niece, but to no purpose. She immediately took up the child, and, returning to her new home, crossed the river and sat down on the opposite bank.

In the heat of the day the child's parents returned from their work in the fields, and found their little one gone. The other children explained how the baby was taken away, and by whom. From that moment Nduna was struck dumb. However his wife followed Mandaliso, and on coming to the river saw the sister on the opposite bank with the child. Nduna's wife then called out: "May we cross over?" And Mandaliso replied: "Yes! Certainly!" I know you are in search of the child, and I wish to speak to you."

The mother at once went over, and on reaching the bank on the other side embraced her little one and her sister. The latter then proceeded to explain how she had become an inhabitant of the river, giving a glowing account of the beautiful things in the palace beneath, and mentioning that all their ancestors, including their parents, were very happy there. Man-

daliso urged her sister to accompany her and see everything for herself. Her desire to see her parents and her love for her sister prevailed. Accordingly Nduna's wife went down to the dwelling beneath the waters with Mandaliso. Being amazed beyond measure at what she saw, she was asked whether she was willing to remain there, or did she wish to return home? Her mother's earnest look decided the question for her, and she replied that she would rather cast her lot in with her ancestors. She was then informed that in any case she would be detained with her children (who had come with her) till her husband did her justice as the daughter of a great chief. Lobola was to be paid for her, and a feast held in honour of her arrival.

Meanwhile the greatest consternation took place in Nduna's establishment. Days and months passed by, but nothing was heard of the two lost sisters, and the bereaved husband's mother felt their absence very keenly. Her son was in no better plight, and together they bitterly mourned the loss of their loved ones.

One evening as Nduna's mother was gathering sticks for the fire, she sat down on a log, and wringing her hands thus lamented her fate, saying: "O daughter! daughter! Why didst thou thus leave me in my old age? Would that I could be with thee wherever thou art, whether in life or death! O my own beloved daughter-in-law, there is no one now to do me the services thou alone wouldst have done! O Death! If thou hearest! Come! Come, and remove me from this existence, and allow my daughter-in-law to be the messenger that will convey me to thee!" So saying she wept long and loud. When she had somewhat recovered from her emotion, her daughter-in-law, who was close by all the time on the other bank of the river, drew near and spoke to her, telling her that she was indeed the messenger, not of death, but of life, sent by Life itself, to show her what a beautiful home they now resided in. Nduna's mother was delighted at the news, and gladly allowed herself to be conveyed to the ancestral abode. Into the river they went together, and the old woman's astonishment when she

arrived at the palace and saw her little grand-daughter sitting on Mandaliso's lap, and the marvellous dwelling with its occupants of high rank, was beyond all description, for everything far exceeded her wildest expectations. Nduna's wife, seeing how her mother-in-law had been very much neglected and weakened by sorrow and lack of proper attention, began to nurse her. As a result of these ministrations, the old woman speedily recuperated, and soon became a portly and apparently young matron again.

As time went on, Nduna's mother was asked by her kind host and hostess whether she did not yearn for her son, and whether she did not wish his family to return to him once more (for they could see the miserable condition to which his love for cattle and greed for wealth had reduced him). She was so overjoyed at the prospect of seeing her son again that her host despatched her with a special message to Nduna asking him to drive all his cattle towards the river. The old woman then found herself on the bank, and immediately set off for her home. On arrival she went up to her son, who was quite overcome at seeing her mother once more, and said: "Nduna! This is your only chance! Do exactly as I tell you, and all your dear ones will be speedily restored." To which he replied: "I am willing to do anything!"

His mother then bade him follow her, and together they drove the cattle in the direction of the river. On approaching the banks, the stream became flooded, and the water, forming great waves which foamed and roared tremendously, came rapidly towards them. Nduna being terrified at this, turned back and ran home. His mother, however, was given strength for the occasion, and alone she drove the cattle on till they met the flood. All were swallowed up by the waters, and a voice from the deep said: "Stay where you are and act according to directions." The stream eventually returned to its former limit, leaving the greater part of the herd on the banks, a few head having been selected by the inmates of the palace for their use.

Suddenly the cattle on the bank were again overwhelmed by the water and carried back to where the old woman stood; then, leaving the chosen animals at her feet, the river receded as before. Nduna's mother now felt convinced that the few bullocks before her were meant to be offered as a sacrifice to appease her hosts. She forthwith drove them home, and said to Nduna (who was still in a state of terror): "Be of good cheer, my son! Up with the slaughter assegai, kill these kine and offer them as a sacrifice to your wife's ancestors, thus you will atone for your avarice and pride. Your family will soon arrive, never again to be parted from us."

Thereupon the offering was made; Nduna's spirits revived and he was once more the brave warrior of former days. Soon after this the river again overflowed. This time the water came up almost to the kraal and deposited all the lost ones, who had become more beautiful than ever, and who brought with them a great herd of cattle as well as numerous presents for Nduna.

Thus was Nduna and his family reunited, never to be parted, and ever after to live the happiest of lives, enjoying the constant protection of their ancestors who lived in the wonderful palace under the river.

And so Nduna had learnt his lesson. He became a model husband and brother-in-law. Under the direction of his ancestors he gained great fame as a mighty warrior, and he used the wealth that was bestowed upon him for the general welfare of his tribe.

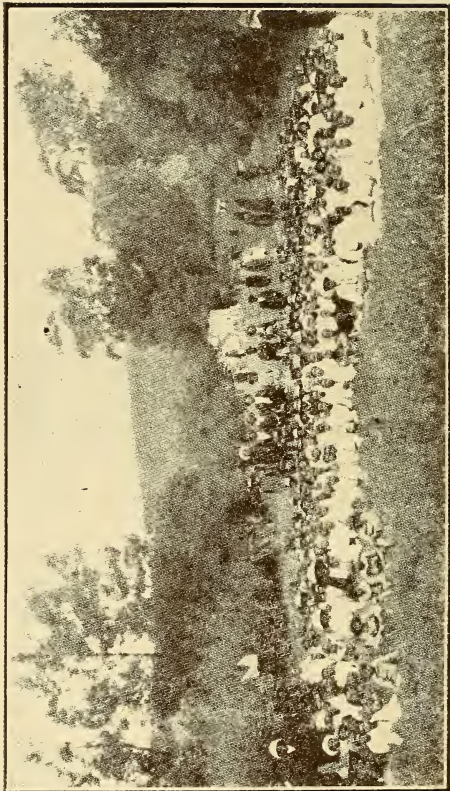


CHAPTER V.

Education. Religion. Conclusion.

EDUCATION.—When used aright, this is a very important lever for the uplifting of the Native tribes. But merely to educate him without instilling into his mind the principles of Christianity produces, in many cases, most unfortunate results. The intricate problem before us may be summed up as follows:—How to guide these people aright, how to protect their interests so that they may not be hurt or “spoiled” by the detrimental additions of civilisation, how to direct and control them to the end that they may become good citizens and useful members of the community?

The smattering of “book learning” that is given to a large majority of Native children in the elementary schools which are scattered throughout the country is, in my opinion, quite inadequate for the purpose. For instance, a young person, after spending a few years in the kind of school referred to, leaves and probably desires to go to service. In the case of the boy, the master of the house finds he has a member of humanity who knows nothing whatever of work, and who, although able to read and write indifferently, is entirely ignorant of European methods of labour. When a Native boy is given employment as a gardener, he requires to be taught the rudiments of agriculture, or even as a general servant, he has to be instructed in the details of his work. The result is that the householder’s time for at least a month or two is taken up as a teacher. The same condition applies to a Native girl from the elementary school. Very



Open-Air Service.

likely she may want to become a housemaid, but she knows nothing of housework, cooking, or any of the duties required of a domestic. One would venture to suggest that it might lead to better results if the large number of elementary schools were more centralised and placed in a position to give the boys and girls some form of industrial training. As a matter of fact, in the larger scholastic institutions, industrial training is given, but the effect, apparently, is not far-reaching enough.

The matter should be taken up thoroughly by the State, more industrial schools instituted and generously subsidised, thus enabling the missionaries to give better practical instruction to a larger number of pupils. Not merely with the object of trying to produce good servants, but, what is even quite as important, in order that such training may be useful to the Natives themselves in their own home life; thus giving them the opportunity of advancing in methods of agriculture, the desire for refinement in the home, and the aspiration for greater efficiency in many details.

The Native sadly lacks discipline and order, consequently a thorough training in all domestic work would eventually have a valuable effect upon the community and be a potent factor in the uplifting and amelioration of the Native races in general. If the young people become accustomed to neatness, cleanliness, order and method, and are taught to do things for themselves, the probability is that on returning to their homes they will not be content with the conditions that so often obtain in the ordinary Native kraal, but it is only to be expected that an ambition to improve matters will result. An effect of this kind could not but exert a beneficial influence.

I am of the opinion that for the majority of Native boys and girls, mere "book learning," and that alone, is most inadequate. Very few who attend the elementary schools go beyond Standard IV., and to be able

to read and write very indifferently is not as important as a good domestic and industrial training. It is necessary, however, that some book-work should be done. Every Native ought at least to be able to read the Scriptures in his own language, to write a letter, and to do some elementary arithmetic. And those who desire to become teachers, clerks, interpreters, ministers of the Gospel, etc., should certainly be educated accordingly, a thorough training in all the academic requirements for any such position being afforded. But for the majority of boys and girls the case is different, and my experience is that in a large number of elementary schools too much time is taken up with reading, writing and arithmetic, and too little given to domestic and industrial training. And this is often due to the absence of proper facilities, and to the lack of funds.

To give the Natives the impression that reading and writing are of greater importance than good honest work is a great pity; such an idea is sure to produce a detrimental reflex action upon the community generally. In training Natives, the elementary lessons of obedience, cleanliness, industry, thrift and honesty are as much needed as anything.

RELIGION.—The Religion of the Natives may be described as a form of Spiritualism, and consists mainly of Ancestral Spirit worship. Originally they had no very definite idea of a Supreme Being. "All their hopes and ideas of life were concentrated in the Ancestral Spirits." Since the advent of the missionaries, the Natives have obtained a better notion of a Supreme Being (called Unkulunkulu, the Great-great One, by the Zulus; Molimo, pronounced Modimo, by the Basutos; Morimo, by the Baralongs; and Utixo, by the Amaxosa), Who created all things, and Who made man and woman.

The first pair is supposed to have come from some great marsh or swamp of reeds or rushes and peopled

the earth. The Great-great One is reported to have sent a message to His children by a chamelion, to the effect that they were to enjoy the blessings of immortality. Later on He sent another message (which was conveyed by a kind of newt or lizard), to the effect that "death was to take the place of life." The first herald, being dilatory, was overtaken and left behind by the more active one (the newt), which reached its destination long before the chamelion, with the unfortunate decree of mortality. This is how death is supposed to have come to the world. Many Natives express the wish that the wretched chamelion had been more energetic, and on seeing one often exclaim: - "That is the creature whose tardiness allowed the emissary of death to bring his unwelcome message to humanity." To the departed or Ancestral Spirits (called Amatongo), is attributed the ability to impart medicinal knowledge and various occult powers, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, magic, etc. In the event of anyone being placed in untoward circumstances, or having to pass through any trying experience, the "amatongo" are petitioned and propitiated, who, if satisfied, will show their acceptance of the petitioner's sacrifice (goat or bullock) by defending him from harm or danger, or granting the necessary fortitude for the trying occasion. In time of sickness the spirits are again conciliated.

It is a strange fact that before the Missionary movement began in South Africa, the majority of Natives would not admit that the soul lives after the decease of the body, yet they have always believed in the existence of "departed spirits." The following incident amply illustrates my point. I was on one occasion riding down the Weza valley with a Native evangelist, and called at a kraal where a "beer drink" was being held. Quite a large number was present, and I asked the kraal owner to collect his visitors for a service, which he promptly did. After the meeting, I had occasion to hold a conversation with him, as follows:—

“ Well, Mahlungulu, when are you to become a Christian?”

“ I don't know!”

“ But don't you think you ought to consider the matter?”

“ Very likely.”

“ Have you ever thought of what may happen to you after death?”

“ After death? Why, when I die, I shall be dead; there is nothing more, the spirit cannot live after leaving the body!”

“ I think you are mistaken, Mahlungulu. Do you not offer sacrifices to the Ancestral Spirits?”

“ Certainly I do! Only four weeks ago I sacrificed a fine young ox during my son's serious illness; that is the skin, so you can judge what a well-favoured beast it was.”

“ Why did you do this?”

“ In order that our Ancestral Spirits might be propitiated and restore my son to health.”

“ And was he restored?”

“ Oh, yes, there he sits, and is quite well again.”

“ Then you believe that your Ancestral Spirits take an interest in all you do, and can assist you in your distress?”

“ Certainly!”

“ But how can they do this if they are dead?”

“ Oh! but they are not dead! On the contrary, the Spirits are very much alive!”

“ And yet you said a moment ago that the spirit of man cannot live after leaving the body!”



Native Evangelist and Assistant.

“ So I did! But you quite astonish me! I never thought of it in that way! Evidently the spirit does live after the death of the body!”

“ Then you are willing to admit that your own spirit will live after your decease?”

“ I suppose so!”

“ Then do you not think it is time to consider what may become of your spirit?”

“ Very likely; but it would be most inconvenient to discuss such matters to-day, as I have so many visitors to entertain, and I am not at all sure whether the beer will go round. I hope to contemplate the subject you speak of on some more suitable occasion!”

Such is an example of the very simple and contradictory processes that sometimes pass through the Native mind. On the one hand admitting and acknowledging the immortality of the soul in practice, while, on the other hand, denying the great fact in theory!

NATIVE CHRISTIANS.—Under the heading of Religion, it might be appropriate to refer to the Native Christians, that is, those who have come under the influence of Missionary teaching. As a rule, the “ heathen ” Native listens attentively to the Gospel message while it is being delivered, but it does not follow by any means that the apparently reverent attitude adopted is an indication of acceptance! On one occasion the following query was put to a Missionary while preaching in a kraal by the head man (who ostensibly had given close attention to the address). “ Where’s my shilling?” “ What shilling of yours?” “ Why, the shilling you owe me for listening all this time to your palaver!”

However, when the Natives do become thoroughly converted, they are very loyal to their church. And while there are those who fail to live up to their

Christian privileges, being weak and feeble and easily led astray, yet there are many, who, as far as their light goes, are really staunch and true. Generally speaking, they lay aside all heathen customs, rites and ceremonies that are contrary to Christianity, but many of the superstitions still adhere to the Native converts of the present generation. However, it is quite evident that with the progress of Gospel teaching an advancement in spiritual things takes place. At the present time Mission work in South Africa is in a "transition stage." And this period is full of peril. There is so much to cause anxiety for the welfare of these people. Undoubtedly as the years roll on, and the Natives become more enlightened, better results will follow. But it is a grave mistake to attempt to civilise these people without the Gospel. Unfortunately there are those who have become civilised in some measure, obtaining an elementary education at a mission school, adopting European clothing, taking on the undesirable accretions of civilisation, and becoming very unpleasant characters. Forged cheques, immorality, drunkenness, thefts, sedition, and other serious faults are often put down to the Mission or "Christian" Native, when such crimes have really been committed by the merely "civilised" Native, who knows nothing of the saving power of the Gospel. Such characters should not be allowed to loaf about the Mission Stations. They become lazy, arrogant, deceitful and cunning, and are most undesirable, to say the least of it!

We should learn to discriminate between the Christian Native, who has been converted from heathenism, who has heard and responded to the Gospel call, and who, as far as he is able, endeavours to live as a Christian should, and the solely civilised Native, who has had some smattering of education, enough to make him think too highly of himself, and who is really at heart as heathenish as his red-clayed, half-naked brother, with the difference that the civilised non-

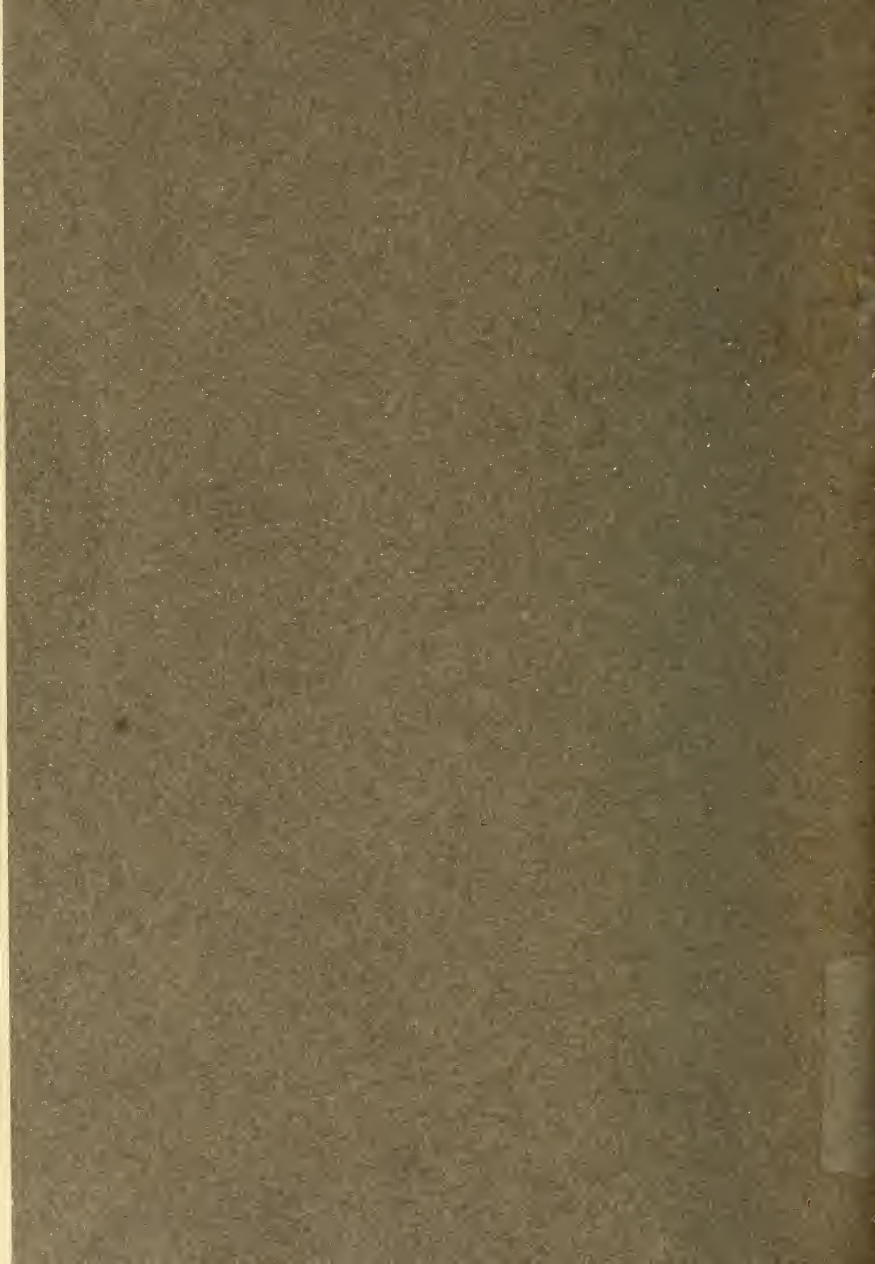
Christian has assumed more of the vices of the European than the heathen. The Natives in their original state are quite indifferent enough to higher things, but when they are tainted by the accompaniments of civilisation apart from the restraining and purifying influences of the Gospel, they become, in many ways, more wretched than formerly, the last state being worse than the first.

Casual observers and superficial thinkers have remarked: "Why not leave these people alone, and allow them to live in their original state without burdening them with civilisation?" In reply to this one would say:—It should be a well-known axiom that a civilised nation cannot come into constant contact with barbarians without some result taking place. Either the civilised section will become contaminated or the barbarous race improved.

Now, in conclusion, the question arises: In the case of the South African Natives, which is it to be? Shall we allow ourselves to degenerate, or shall we exert ourselves with a view to uplifting and improving these aboriginal people? There can only be one course of procedure for those who really have the interests of humanity at heart, and that is, to formulate some system that will tend towards the elevation and development of these races. If we do not bestir ourselves in this direction, the consequence may be of such a nature as to create a baneful influence on our own countrymen. The Natives are becoming civilised every day as an inevitable result of their contact with the Europeans in the country, and it behoves all those who desire to be instrumental in encouraging the progress of the community (white as well as black) to see to it that such salutary influences will be brought to bear upon the Natives as will promote their betterment.

In this great work we really do need something that will not leave us defeated, humiliated, and appalled by the circumstances of the case ; we need something that will eventually give certain triumph over the sin, degradation, and superstition of heathenism, and that will make men rise to their responsibilities as members of the human race, and create in them an ambition for better things. And there is no influence more potent and effectual for this end than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.

THE END.







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